

Parsons Nursery, Cheat District Ranger
Residence
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-P

HABS
WVA
47-PARS.V,
1P-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS
WVA
47-PARS.V,
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HABS No. WV-237-P

PARSONS NURSERY, Cheat District Ranger Residence

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614372.4327445

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Cheat Ranger District
Monongahela National Forest

Last Use: Cheat Ranger District Ranger residence; now
vacant

Significance: The Cheat District Ranger residence was built
in 1937 by members of the Civilian
Conservation Corps Camp Parsons. This was
the first District Ranger residence built by
the Monongahela National Forest. It was the
home of the District Ranger until the flood
of November, 1985. The District Ranger
complex at the Parsons Nursery Bottom is the
oldest such complex in Monongahela National
Forest. As an administrative complex, it is
unusual for its shared use of facilities with
other Forest Service facilities. For an
overview of Parsons Nursery, see HABS No. WV-
237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1937, is derived from C. R. McKim, Monongahela National Forest History, draft manuscript, 1970, and from John King, who was Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons Supervisor during the construction.
2. Architect: Neither architect nor landscape architect are known.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The Cheat District Ranger residence was constructed by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons for Monongahela National Forest, according to John King.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: Aluminum siding. Lower part of interior wall finish removed on first floor exterior walls, 1985. Building to be demolished: 1990.

B. Historical Context:

The Cheat District of Monongahela National Forest was formed in 1920, shortly after the founding of Monongahela National Forest. In 1938, the decision was made to construct District Ranger offices and residences on each of the Districts in the Forest. The Cheat District received the first funding, with the residence constructed using 1937 Fiscal Year funds at a cost of \$9,399.00 and the office constructed in 1938. Ralph Smoot was the first ranger to occupy the residence. Successive rangers and their families occupied the residence. Families were friendly and socialized with the families of the nursery manager and Fernow Experimental Forest resident, but none had responsibility or professional interaction with the others.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Cheat District Ranger residence is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic style. This building differs from the other buildings at the Parsons Nursery Bottom by once having painted wood siding, now replaced with aluminum siding. Like many of the Nursery Bottom

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buildings, it has extensive use of native chestnut lumber and follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints used under the lap siding.

2. Condition of fabric: Poor but structurally sound. Flood damage wetted all walls and insulation in wall spaces. To remove damaged insulation, wall covering was removed on the lower 3'-9" of outside walls of first floor rooms. Some aluminum storm sash removed.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-and-one-half story, rectangular plan, this building is 30'-7" x 35'-0". The front has three bays, the sides also are three bays. There is a full basement. The second story has two bedrooms and attic.
2. Foundation: 8" concrete block foundation, 7'-0" ceiling height.
3. Walls: Exterior walls have aluminum horizontal siding, 8" exposure, which replaced the original, painted, horizontal, wood siding. There are 3" vinyl corner boards. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 11'-4". The foundation-roof height at the peak of the roof is 22'-8".
4. Structural system: The wood frame is not exposed except where the interior finish has been removed. Walls are "2x4's" on 16" centers with double studed windows and doors. The exterior walls are covered with "1x6" diagonal sheathing in a chevron pattern. The roof has "2x8" rafters on 22" with "1x6" tongue-and-groove roof sheathing.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The front, bungalow porch is 27' x 7'. It has a concrete floor, 21" above grade, with a 7'-8" ceiling. There are four porch posts, each "8x8" with beveled 5-1/2" base and 3" beaded cove mold cap. The main decorative feature is the balustrade, made of jig-sawn "1x6's". The balustrade is 31" tall, with top and bottom rail 4" x 2-1/2".

The rear door has a hooded cover made of "6x6's" with "6x6" braces that are bolted to the "6x6" vertical supports.

6. Chimneys: There are two exterior chimneys, one for the fireplace, 6'x 1'-2", the second for the furnace flue,

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1'-3" x 1'-3". Both are exterior. The furnace flue is modern, of concrete block. The fireplace chimney has an edge-laid running bond rake, 2'-4" x 3'-0" stack of wire-cut red brick bonded every eighth course. The cap is a soldier course of brick.

7. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: Front and rear center doorways have plain, white-painted 4-1/2" jambs and head, butt-jointed. The front and rear doors are pine with six lights over two raised and molded panels. They are 6'-7 1/2" tall.

b. Windows and shutters: Windows have 4-1/2" jambs and heads, butt-jointed with 1-1/2" sills. Most first story windows are the same, double hung wooden sash, of 6/6 lights, 4'-7" x 2'-8". The living room windows on each side of the fireplace are casement windows, four lights, 2' x 1'-10". The dining room has a three-part bay window, 53" tall, with 8/8 center sash and 4/4 side sash, double hung sash. The bathroom has a 2/2 double hung window. The kitchen sash is new. Sash on the landing is casement, nine panes, 2'-10" x 2'-4". Second story sash is double hung, 6/6 lights, 3'-9" x 2'-6". There are triple hung aluminum screens/storm sash on most windows. There never were window shutters.

8. Roof: The gable roof and three dormers have asbestos shingles that has replaced to original sawn cedar shingles. At the porch overhang, the fascia is a "1x6" with 2" cove molding that projects 3" plus an aluminum gutter. On the rake, there is a "1x6" with 2" cove molding. The dormers have the same peak detail and horizontal cheek aluminum siding. There is a triangular, pressed, galvanized, louver, roof vent at each gable end, approximately 18" tall.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular building has a basement, first and second floor. The basement is three structural bays supported by two steel I-beams that run across the building. The front bay is divided into three rooms with 4' block walls, each with a door. There also is a basement food cellar on the north side. The basement ceiling is 7'-0".

The first floor has a south, front, living room with dining room and kitchen behind. On the north, off the

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dining room, is a stair hall with front and back bedrooms and a center bath. The first floor ceiling is 9'-0". On the second story is a center hall with bedrooms to either side of a small attic. The second story ceiling is 8'-0".

2. Stairways: The stairs have a landing, short first floor banister and balustrade around the stair well on the second floor. It has oak treads and chestnut risers. All trim is chestnut. The newels are 3-1/2" square, balusters are 1" square, the stair well skirt is 11", with a 1/2" cove molding.
3. Flooring: All rooms have 2-1/4" oak flooring, except the kitchen and bath which have modern vinyl flooring. The back hall has "1x6" pine flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: As a part of the conscious rustic design, the living room walls are unstained, unvarnished, native chestnut, tongue-and-groove boards with a bevel edge. Other walls are rough finish plaster. All rooms, except the kitchen and bath, have 3" chestnut crown molding and 6" chestnut baseboard. The kitchen has smooth plaster and painted woodwork; the bath has plastic sheeting walls and ceiling.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doors: All doorways have 4" unfinished, mitered chestnut architraves. Doors are brown stained, varnished, pine, five-panel doors, 6'-8". Bathroom doorway trim is modern; door is painted white, inside.
 - b. Windows: All windows have unfinished, mitered 4" chestnut architrave, like the doorways. There is a 4" under sill chestnut molding at each window. All interior sash is natural, varnished pine, except in the kitchen and bath.
6. Decorative features and trim: The fireplace in the living room has a plain 1-1/2" chestnut shelf above a molding around the fireplace opening. There originally were chestnut bookcase on either side of the fireplace, removed in 1985. The chestnut kitchen cabinets have been removed to the basement. Forced air furnace grilles in the living room and dining room are black-painted cast iron in a decorative, peaked "gothic" pattern.
7. Hardware: The front door hardware is plain, brass-plated iron with three ball-pinned hinges and a plain, brass-

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plated iron knob without plate. Rear door hardware is modern. Windows have brass-plated iron thumb locks.

8. Mechanical equipment: The furnace, plumbing and wiring is damaged from a flood. No mechanical systems have been repaired, removed or replaced.
9. Original furnishings: None.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces southwest, $237^{\circ}30'$. It survives on its original site, together with most of the original structures and all the original Fernow Experimental Forest structures.
2. Historic landscape design: Forest Service records hold two landscape plans for the Cheat District Ranger residence, one dated 1939, the second dated 1965. From these plans, Harry Mahoney, Cheat Ranger in the 1960's, recalls that a wooden grape arbor did extend from the garage south, that there were two apple and two dogwood trees. His recall suggests that little from those two plans was actually planted. Neither these plants nor structure survive.
3. Outbuildings: The Cheat District Ranger garage built in 1939, is east of the residence, accessed from the lane that divides the second and third nursery plots. It has a gable roof and rectangular plan, $20'-10" \times 21'-4"$. Its design, construction, and detailing does not mirror that of the Cheat District Ranger residence. The floor and foundation is poured concrete. The framing is "2x4's" at 16" centers with tripled "2x4's" at the corners, wall sills, and wall plates. There are diagonal "2x4" corner braces. The windows are single studded. The rafters are "2x6's" at 16" centers with a "1x10" ridge board. There is a "2x6" wall tie at every other rafter space. There is no diagonal sheathing.

The exterior is white-painted clapboard, 8" exposure, with 4" corner boards. The roof has a 6" overhang with boxed corner. The sides have a 1-1/2" crown mold on top of a "1x6" rake board projecting 5-1/2".

Doorways and windows have butt-jointed architraves. Both overhead garage doors and the rear door are modern. Window sash is hinged at the bottom, catches at top. It is six-light single sash.

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There is a shed roof car port on the southwest side with four log posts.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: None.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-42; Harry Mahoney, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Cheat District Ranger, 1964-1975.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

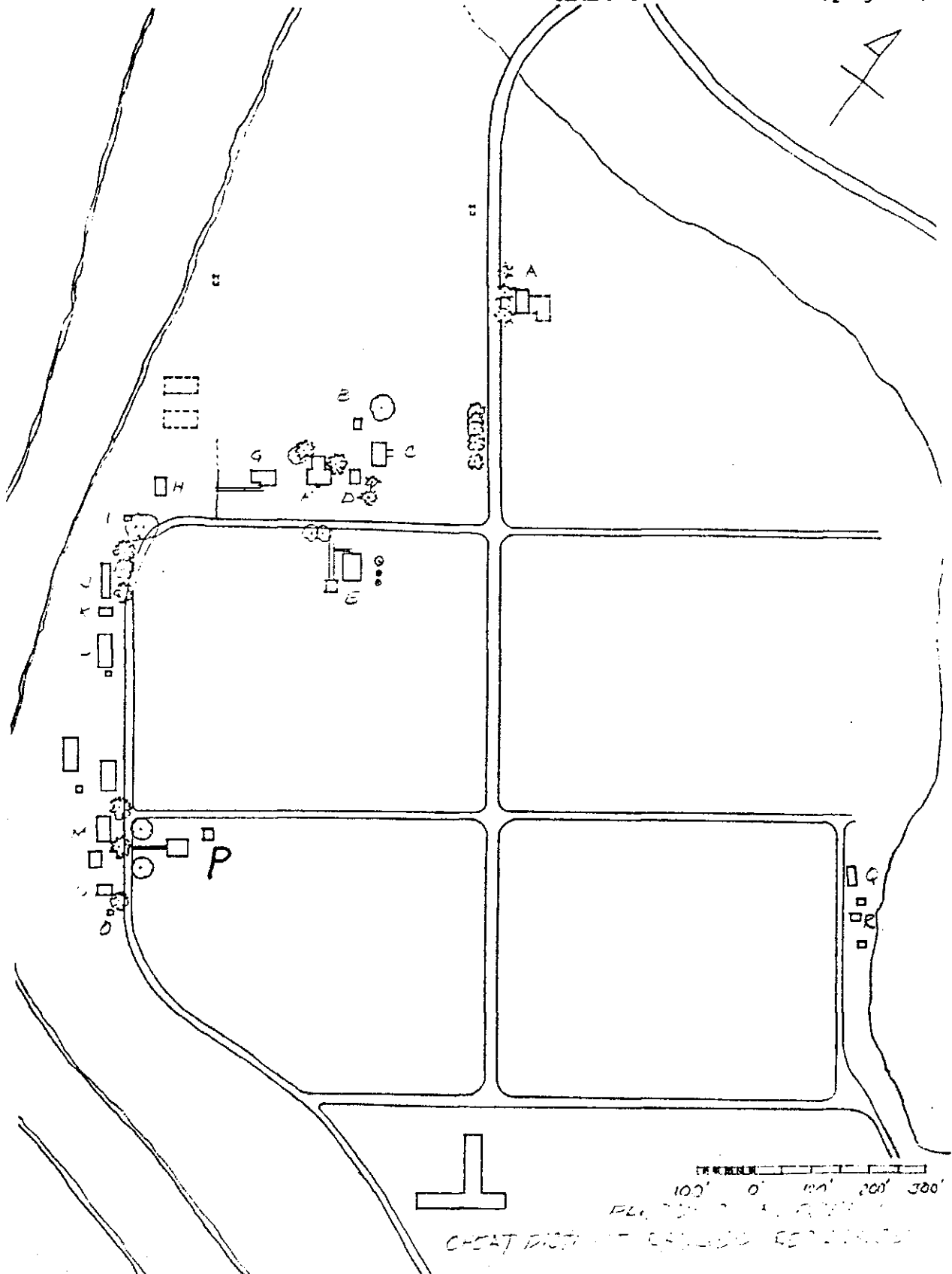
Monongahela National Forest, Proposed Plan, Parsons Nursery, unpublished manuscript, 1938.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

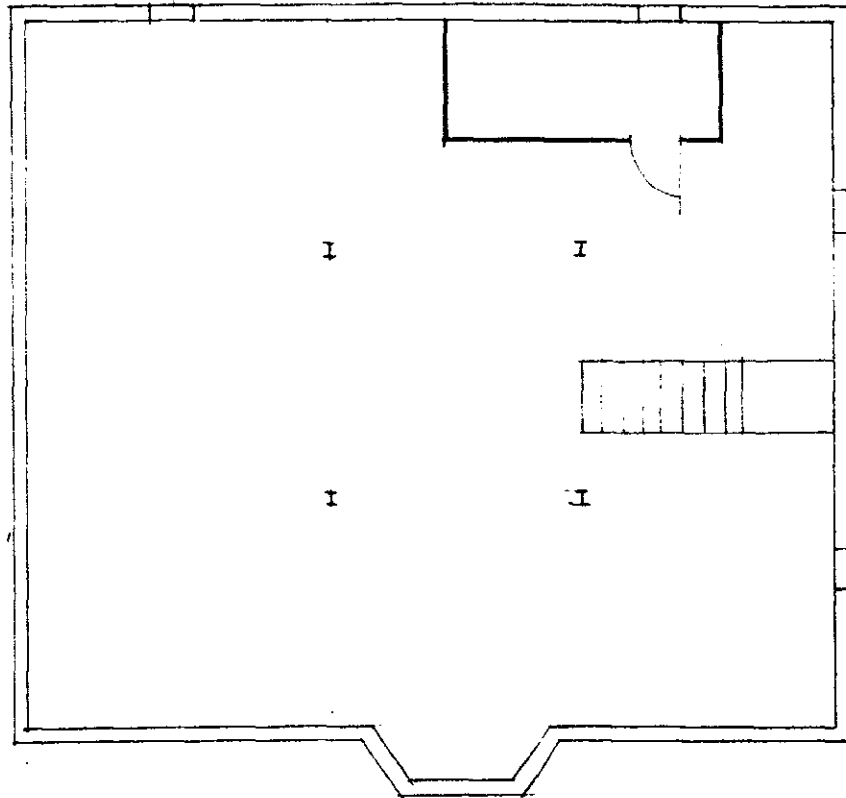
The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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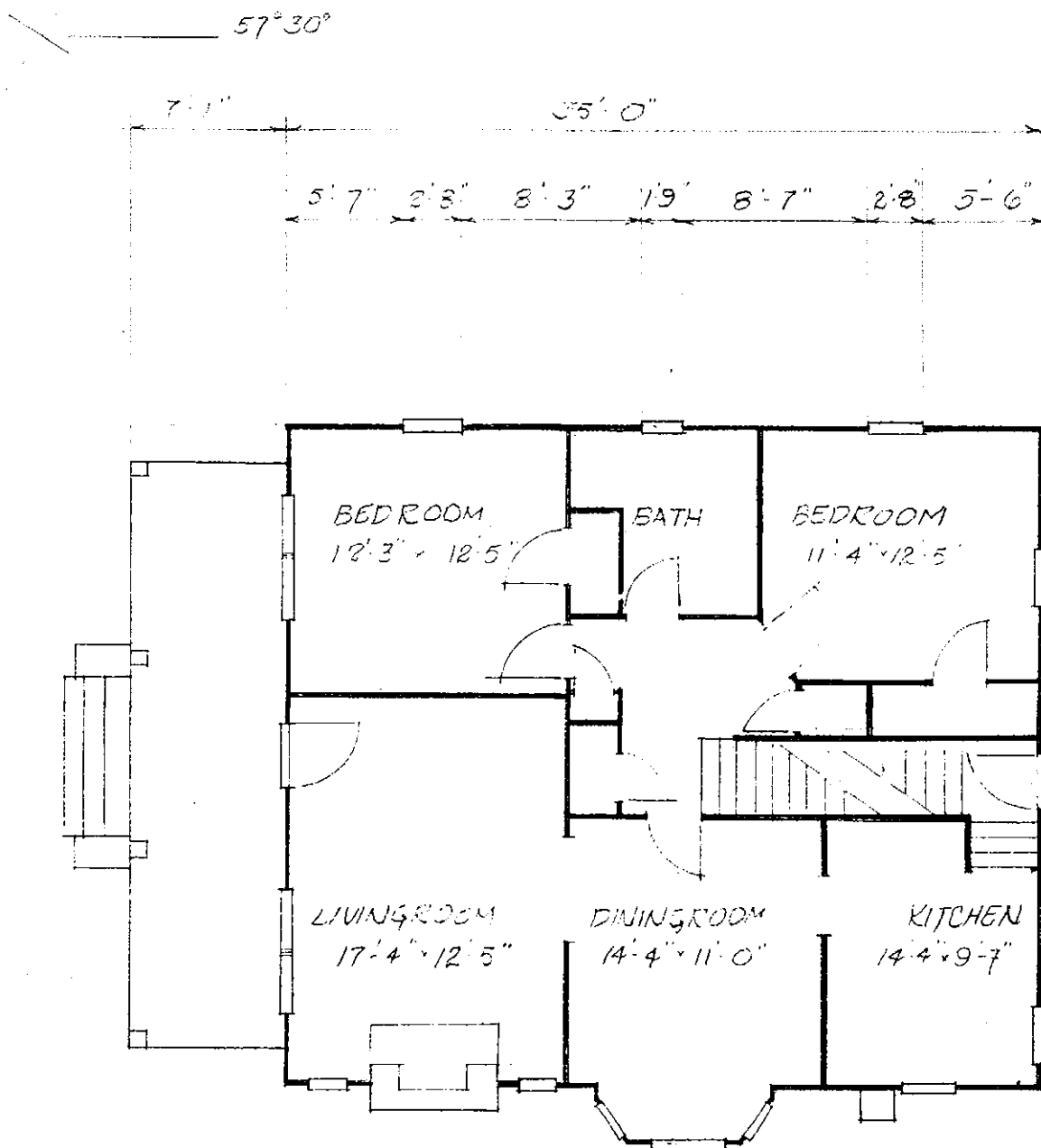


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CHEAT DISTRICT RANGER RESIDENCE - BASEMENT
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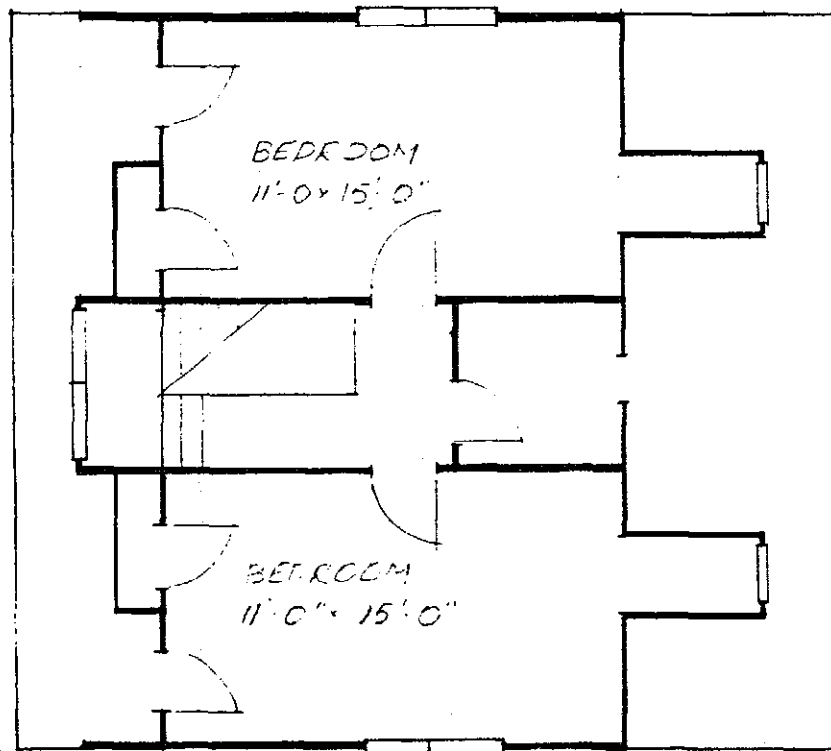


CHEAT DISTRICT RANGER RESIDENCE

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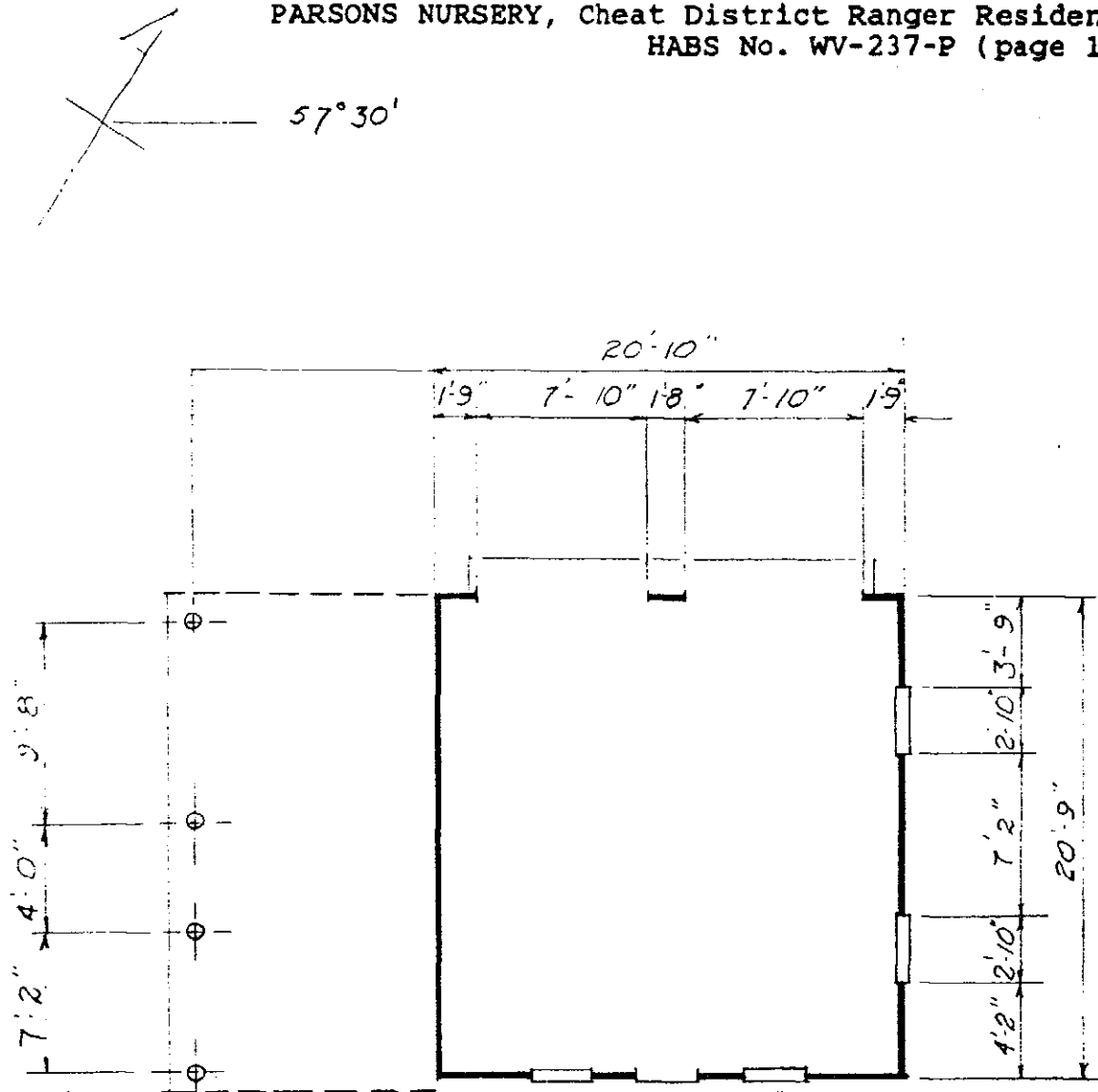


CHEAT DISTRICT RANGER RESIDENCE - 2ND FLOOR

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CHEAT DISTRICT RANGER RESIDENCE GARAGE

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